

casters of news, dramatic, game show, talk show, and other programming versatile system for handling interactive communications.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made in the system of the present invention without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Thus, it is intended that the present invention cover modifications and variations of this invention provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

I claim:

1. An interactive system for processing viewer responses to television programming, said system comprising:

a central exchange including:

a database containing a plurality of first codes uniquely identifying various television programs, a plurality of second codes, unique program data associated with each first code, and unique console data associated with each second code, and

a processor; and

a plurality of consoles, each said console connected in a path of TV signals derived from the television programming to a television receiver and including:

a code reader for reading the first codes included with TV signals of programs as displayed by the television receiver,

a register storing the second code uniquely identifying said console,

a controller, and

an actuator activated by a viewer in response to a program being displayed by the television receiver to signal said controller to transmit to said processor over a communications link the second code from said register and the first code currently being read by said code reader, whereby, said processor, in response to the received first and second codes, searches the databases to locate the first and second codes corresponding to the received first and second codes and sends the stored program data associated with the received first code to the viewer at a location of said console indicated by the stored console data associated with the received second code.

2. The interactive system defined in claim 1, wherein the stored program data is sent to the viewer over the communications link.

3. The interactive system defined in claim 2, wherein the communications link is a phone line.

4. The interactive system defined in claim 2, wherein the communications link is a cable TV line.

5. The interactive system defined in claim 1, wherein each said console includes a printer for producing a hard copy of the program data received from said central exchange.

6. The interactive system defined in claim 1, wherein the first codes are encoded signals transmitted during

vertical interval times between frames of the TV signals.

7. The interactive system defined in claim 6, wherein the program data are encoded signals transmitted during vertical interval times between frames of the TV signals.

8. An interactive system for processing viewer responses to television programming, said system comprising:

a central exchange including:

a database containing a plurality of first codes uniquely identifying various television programs, a plurality of second codes, unique program data associated with each first code, and unique console data associated with each second code,

a data transmitter, and

a processor; and

a plurality of consoles, each said console connected in a path of TV signals derived from the television programming to a television receiver and including:

a code reader for reading the first codes included with TV signals of programs as displayed by the television receiver,

a printer,

a register storing the second code uniquely identifying said console,

a controller, and

an actuator activated by a viewer in response to a program being displayed by the television receiver to signal said controller to transmit to said processor over a communications link the second code from said register and the first code currently being read by said code reader, whereby, said processor, in response to the received first and second codes, searches the database to locate the first and second codes corresponding to the received first and second codes and activates said data transmitter to transmit the stored program data associated with the received first code to the console identified by the received second code for printout by said printer.

9. The interactive system defined in claim 8, wherein said data transmitter is a first facsimile apparatus and said printer is included in a second facsimile apparatus.

10. The interactive system defined in claim 8, wherein the communications link is a phone line, and said data transmitter sends a facsimile transmission of the program data over the phone line to the identified console.

11. The interactive system defined in claim 10, wherein the first codes are encoded signals transmitted during the vertical interval times between frames of the TV signals.

12. The interactive system defined in claim 8, wherein the communications link is a cable TV line, and said data transmitter sends a facsimile transmission of the program data over the cable TV line to the identified console.

\* \* \* \* \*